

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

## GRANT APPLICATION TITLE PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT/PROGRAM Topanga Southwest Pond Turtle Surveys

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT Third District

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT CONTACT Susan Nissman

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT DEPUTY Susan Nissman

TELEPHONE NUMBER(S) 818-880-9416

DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains  
 [As it appears on (501) (c) (3) IRS Letter] (If applicable)

ADDRESS P.O. Box 638

CITY Agoura Hills STATE CA ZIP CODE 91376-0638

TELEPHONE NUMBER 818-597-8627x102 FAX NUMBER 818-597-8630

AMOUNT REQUESTED \$2,667

AUDITED TOTAL INCOME \$707,802 AUDITED TOTAL EXPENSES \$761,206

FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING 2009 AND ENDING 2010

*Zsuzsanna Lauksy*  
 SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

1/6/12  
 DATE

Note: Please complete this title page and attach all grant application materials prior to submission. If you have any question you may contact the Fish and Game Commission staff at (213) 974-1431.

For all areas that are not applicable, please indicate N/A in area.

Grant Application  
Page 2

One Page Project Summary

The Topanga Creek Watershed is the third largest watershed within the Santa Monica Bay, and retains the largest remaining reproducing population of species of special concern, such as the southwestern pond turtle. Since 2002, the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains has been collaborating with a coalition of local agencies (National Park Service, USGS) to conduct annual presence/absence and abundance counts, and to track the largest remaining population in the Santa Monica Mts., found in Topanga. The RCD biologists recruit and train community volunteers, including scout troupes, homeschoolers, and others to assist in this long term monitoring effort. This grant would provide critical funding needed to support the trained biologists and team leaders needed to lead the field effort.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Grant Application  
Page 3

Background on Applicant:

Purpose and goals:

The RCDSMM has provided important resource management information to all our constituents within the District since 1961. We have a long history of education, outreach and implementation of watershed planning and restoration with the Santa Monica Mountains.

Brief summary of current activities:

The research and education team at the RCDSMM has been coordinating studies of sensitive and endangered species in the Santa Monica Mountains, including southern steelhead trout, tidewater gobies, and southwestern pond turtles. Our team relies upon dedicated, trained community volunteers for assistance.

Geographic area served:

The boundaries of the RCDSMM extend from Encino to Thousand Oaks, from the Chatsworth reservoir south to the ocean, and Catalina Island. The focus of this effort will be within the Topanga Creek Watershed.

Grant Application  
Page 4

Major sources and dollar amounts of corporate, foundation and government support during current and past fiscal year:

Funding for our reptile studies has been limited in the past year to private donations from individuals. By "Adopting" a Topanga Turtle, interested supporters generated approximately \$3,000 in 2011. This funding covered the cost of abbreviated summer monitoring of the turtles last season.

Previous years of this monitoring were funded by a grant from the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (2002-2006) and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area -NPS (2009).

We currently have approximately \$2,000 of donations towards work in 2012.

History of all grants received from the Los Angeles County Fish and Game Commission:

The RCDSMM has not received any grants from the Fish and Game Commission to date.

Grant Application  
Page 5

Project Information

Statement of justification of need:

Southwestern pond turtles are declining throughout southern California, but are of particular concern in Los Angeles County, where their numbers are very small and populations isolated. The RCD conducted a survey throughout the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in 2009, and found that there are only two locations with populations of over 50 individuals remaining in the mountains. A study done in 1986 (De Lisle, et al 1986) recorded 30 different locations with turtles. In 2009, a concerted search found only a few individuals remained at 8 locations.

Statement of purpose and goals:

The purpose of this study is to continue long term monitoring of the sensitive turtle populations within the Topanga Creek Watershed.

- Goals: 1. Identify and remediate environmental stressors
- 2. Protect current populations from further decline
- 3. Develop management plan for maintaining important habitat
- 4. Work with landowners to implement protective measures

Action plan to meet objectives:

The work will be done in two parts:

- 1. Continued monitoring of the turtles in Topanga will rely upon our standard monthly summer trapping, along with focused surveys using snorkeling. All individuals are tagged and released following data collection. (Permits are in place.)
- 2. Work with landowners to develop and implement protective measures that will preserve habitat and reduce threats.

Grant Application  
Page 6

Statement of how the objectives advance the propagation and protection of fish and wildlife:

It is not possible to manage any population without data on abundance, distribution and long-term information on trends. By supporting the continuation of this on-going effort, we will have the information needed to develop suitable management and protection efforts that will enhance and protect the few remaining turtle populations within the Santa Monica Mountains.

Project budget and timetable:

Project start: April 2012	Project end: October 2012	
Budget:		
Biologist field leaders (3)	60 hours @ \$40/hr	\$2,400
Field supplies (bait)	\$1 x 24	\$24
RCD Administrative overhead (10%)		\$243
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>		<b>\$2,667</b>

Sources of other support for project:

Volunteers (15) at 20 hours each = 300 hours x \$10.80/hr	\$3,240
Adopt a Turtle Fund	\$2,000

Grant Application  
Page 7

Current status of project:

The turtle monitoring efforts has been on-going since 2002.  
Attached please find the summary report provided to NPS on the turtles in 2009.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Cash flow analysis of the expenditure of project funds:

Funds will be allocated to cover personnel costs starting in April 2012 and end in October 2012. The RCD runs payroll monthly and would invoice for the amount used per month.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Proposed method of evaluating results:

We have in place a well vetted Quality Assurance/Quality Control program to ensure that all data is collected, entered and analyzed properly. Data is shared among all interested partners and made available to the public upon request. Due to the potential for poaching, we are careful not to provide access information to the general public. We all have all necessary scientific permits and landowner permission to work on the property (which belongs to the Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy.)

---

---

Grant Application  
Page 8

Plans for funding on-going project (if applicable):

Our goal is to find continuous funding so that we can continue these studies for a minimum of 20 years, as that is thought to be the minimum needed in order to understand the fluctuations of populations over time within natural variability ranges. This project also provides a rare opportunity for local community volunteers to be directly involved in collecting data critical for making sound management plans for these species. Although the turtles are fairly long-lived, the genetic dispersion is so constrained at present, that tracking individuals over a long time frame may be the only way to develop a strategy for long-term survival. Keeping track of our more sensitive species will help us better understand and track the response of these species to changes in climate, habitat, hydrologic regime and water quality. Turtles provide an important window into how our actions, both locally and globally translate into on-the-ground impacts.

Please Attach the Following Supporting Documents, if applicable:

- Copy of the Latest IRS Determination Letter of Tax Exempt Status under Section 501(c) (3)
- Organization's Most Recent Audited Financial Statement
- Organization Most Recent IRS Form 990



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dennis Washburn  
President

David Gottlieb  
Vice President

Steve Rosentsweig  
Treasurer

Nancy Helsley  
Director

R.C. Brody  
Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Clark Stevens, AIA

January 4, 2012

County of Los Angeles  
Fish and Game Commission

Dear Commissioners,

In compliance with the request for supporting documents relevant to the fiscal status of the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica (RCDSMM), we provide the following information.

The RCDSMM, a subdivision of the State of California, is a local special district organized under division 9 of the CA Public Resources Code.

Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 115 states that the gross income of a subdivision of a state is not taxable by the Federal government.

IRC Section 170(c)(1) states that contributions to subdivisions of a state are tax deductible as long as they are used for public purposes.

Therefore, the RCDSMM does not submit forms or pay federal income tax and contributions to the RCDSMM are tax deductible.

We appreciate the support of Supervisor Yaroslavsky for our efforts to provide important resource management information that will help protect and preserve the Santa Monica Mountains.

Sincerely,

John Hendra  
Operations Manager